Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 464-5100.

NOVEMBER, 1988

SEPTEMBER, 1988
TOP 20 TITHES
(Received by October 10, 1988)

1.	MCC Dallas	Dallas	TX	$2,691.08
2.	MCC Washington DC	Washington	DC	1,725.26
3.	MCC San Diego	San Diego	CA	1,649.43
4.	MCC San Francisco	San Francisco	CA	1,237.68
5.	MCC of the Resurrection	Houston	TX	1,166.39
6.	All God's Children MCC	Minneapolis	MN	997.57
7.	River City MCC	Sacramento	CA	905.11
8.	MCC in the Valley	N. Hollywood	CA	892.83
9.	MCC Long Beach	Long Beach	CA	876.60
10.	First MCC of Kansas	Wichita	KS	713.64
11.	King of Peace MCC	St. Petersburg	FL	664.21
12.	MCC Detroit	Detroit	MI	659.94
13.	MCC Portland	Portland	OR	637.89
14.	MCC San Antonio	San Antonio	TX	481.12
15.	St. Luke's MCC	Jacksonville	FL	478.27
16.	MCC Key West	Key West	FL	467.85
17.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC	Des Moines	IA	458.58
18.	MCC Tampa	Tampa	FL	450.89
19.	Christ Chapel MCC	Santa Ana	CA	441.05
20.	MCC Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	431.86

SEPTEMBER, 1988
TOP 20 PER CAPITA
(Received by October 10, 1988)

1.	MCC Ocean of Life	Costa Mesa	CA	28.02
2.	MCC of Northern Virginia	Oakton	VA	27.08
3.	MCC Rockville	Rockville	MD	24.62
4.	MCC Tacoma	Tacoma	WA	21.89
5.	MCC of the Disciples	Washington	DC	20.64
6.	Church of the Resurrection	Chicago	IL	20.26
7.	First MCC of Kansas	Wichita	KS	19.34
8.	MCC at Boise	Boise	ID	18.74
9.	Trinity MCC	Gainesville	FL	18.36
10.	MCC San Diego	San Diego	CA	18.19
11.	MCC of the Vineyard	Fresno	CA	17.92
12.	MCC Mt. Vernon	Mt. Vernon	WA	17.79
13.	MCC Long Beach	Long Beach	CA	17.02
14.	MCC Baltimore	Baltimore	MD	16.30
15.	Open Arms MCC	Rochester	NY	15.77
16.	MCC Dallas	Dallas	TX	15.53
17.	MCC of Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi	TX	15.23
18.	MCC Detroit	Detroit	MI	14.80
19.	Johnson County MCC	Lenexa	KS	14.75
20.	MCC Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	PA	14.74

PRAISES

Praises to God for an exciting and successful Clergy Conference! From October 3-6, 122 UFMCC clergy gathered at the Holiday Inn in Hollywood for the largest and most varied UFMCC Clergy Conference yet. The theme of this Clergy Advance was "Following Jesus Into the 21st Century". Activities included an Elders' Panel, small group sharing with Elders, peer sharing with colleagues engaged in a similar ministry, nine practical workshops, and three worship services, including a Memorial Eucharist for deceased clergy colleagues.

Congratulations to MCC Brooklyn who celebrated their 4th Anniversary on October 30th. Rev. Susan Eenigenburg, founding pastor of the church, was their guest speaker. May God continue to bless the ministry of MCC Brooklyn.

Praises are with Angel of Hope MCC, Green Bay, Wisconsin as they have their 50 hour Vigil of Prayer on November 4-6, 1988. Join with them in Spirit with prayers of love and support as they help others to believe that "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:54).

For a wonderful and glorious 20th Anniversary Celebration at the Registry Hotel in Hollywood, CA on October 6th. Spirits were high and love was abundant as many shared what this Fellowship has been for them these past 20 years. May God bless our ministry in the forthcoming years.

PRAYERS

Ms. Kerry Brown passed away on October 28; prayers are requested for her spouse, Rev. Nancy Radclyffe and her family. A Memorial Service was held at MCC of the Pomona Valley on November 1. Kerry requested that any donations be sent to MCC LA's Memorial Wall in Kerry's name for a memorial plaque.

Keep Pepe Alonso, partner of Dr. Armando Hernandez, Director of Hispanic Americas Ministries, in your prayers as they amputated his leg at a point just below the knee. Both Pepe and Armando request your prayers of love and support in this time of adjustment.

Prayers for the family and friends of Russ Fetters who died the first part of October. Russ held the position of Clerk of the Southwest District and will be missed greatly.

(Continued)

PRAYERS (cont'd)

For R. Adam DeBaugh, Mid-Atlantic District Coordinator, and his family as they grieve the loss of his Mother. Our prayers are with you Adam, we love you.

Prayers are requested for MCC San Diego, family and friends in the passing of Mr. Wayne Fabert. Many of you will remember Wayne as the Head Usher at General Conference XIII in Miami, Florida in 1987.

Prayers for Rev. Shelley Hamilton, pastor of Vieux Carre MCC, New Orleans, LA who's Father died in early October. Please support her with your prayers of love.

SAMARITAN CLASSES HELD IN CITIES IN THE U.S.

The following is a schedule of Samaritan Classes that will be given in various cities in the U.S.:

Class	Location/ District	Faculty	Start
Understanding the Bible	Dallas	L. Berry	Oct
Understanding the Bible	Oklahoma City	B.J. McDaniels	Oct
Intro. to Sexuality	Portland	G. Wilson	Oct
Intro. to Sexuality	San Francisco	R. Russell-Coon	Nov
Intro. to Sexuality	Jacksonville	F. White	Nov
Intro. to Sexuality	Washington DC	H. Stock	Nov
Intro. to Sexuality	Grand Rapids	B. Roller	Nov
Intro. to Sexuality	Springfield, MO	K. Williams	Nov
Intro. to Sexuality	Toronto, ONT	C. Crossman	Nov

If you need further information about the classes, please contact the appropriate faculty.

FAITH, FELLOWSHIP & ORDER

In pursuing our continuing efforts towards developing a theology of sexuality, the Faith, Fellowship & Order Commission (FFO) is collecting written materials from all segments of the UFMCC. Our purpose is to expand our resources for developing a Christian Theology of Sexuality from the people.

We know that many of you have thought deeply on this subject and we hope that many of you will share your reflections with us. If you or others whom you know within our churches have written articles, sermons, stories, poetry, meditations or other materials relating to a Theology of Sexuality which can be used for Theological Reflection or as material for workshops or study series, send a copy to:

Rev. Virginia G. Miles
752 West Side Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Please include your name & address for reference and attribution. If we should wish to utilize your material in any one of our workshops or publications, we will contact you for permission.

EUROPEAN DEACONS 'GET IT TOGETHER!'

Following upon informal discussions during and after the 1987 District Conference, the nine Deacons and trainees of the European North Sea District, have agreed the establishment of their Diaconal Association.

As in so many districts, the churches in which they were called to serve are widely spaced, from Dublin in Eire, to Copenhagen in Denmark, and so they find it difficult to keep in touch, other than by mail, conferences, and a few personal visits. They have agreed to build on the original idea for a support group mooted by Rev. Bob Jones of Liverpool.

Unlike most district of the Fellowship, the Deacons are sometimes called upon to serve as Pastoral Leaders, and some have fulfilled this role for a number of years,-viz- Terry Roberts (Liverpool) and Peter Parker (Bournemouth) who, incidentally, according to information received, probably holds the Fellowship record for a long-serving lay leader, having had sole responsibility for his church from April 1981 until April 1986, when Rev. Frank Scott was 'shanghaied' from Ventura, California, to pastor the growing South Coast church.

At the November 1988 District Conference, to be held in Bournemouth, the fledgling Association will elect a Secretary-General, and invite a chosen pastor to become their spiritual advisor, all this, with the intention of supporting one another more fully, and in so doing, to improve and refine their service to the communities in which they serve.

The Association would be interested to hear from other Districts which have Diaconal groups, to offer, and perhaps, to receive, information and support. Mail may be addressed to the interim Secretary-P.W. Parker, at the Bournemouth Church, P.O. Box 316, Bournemouth, BH1 4HL; or to his home address - 35 Vicarage Road, Oakdale, Poole BH15 3AX England. Peter will act for the Association until the Secretary-General is elected, and takes up duties.

CELEBRATION!

The Metropolitan Community Church of Brooklyn, NY celebrated UFMCC's 20th Anniversary on Sunday, October 9th. Encounter International, a ministry tour group from MCC Long Beach, California was their special guests leading the celebration.

Many MCC's around the world celebrated the 20th Anniversary of UFMCC in many different ways, through the month of October. God bless all of you, and may there be abundantly more celebrations to come.

UFMCC CALENDAR OF THE CHURCH YEAR 1989

SEASON	DATE	CELEBRATION	LITURGICAL COLOR
ADVENT	Sunday, Nov. 27, 1988	1st Sun. in Advent	Blue or Purple
	Sunday, Dec. 4, 1988	2nd Sun. in Advent	Blue or Purple
	Sunday, Dec. 11, 1988	3rd Sun. in Advent	Blue or Purple
	Sunday, Dec. 18, 1988	4th Sun. in Advent	Blue or Purple
CHRISTMASTIDE	Sat., Dec. 24, 1988	Christmas Eve	Rainbow, Gold, or White (at midnight)
	Sunday, Dec. 25, 1988	Christmas Day, Festival of Incarnation	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Monday, Dec. 26, 1988	1st Day of Kwanzaa (Afro-American)	
	Sat., Dec. 31, 1988	New Year's Eve, Watchnight	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Sunday, Jan. 1, 1989	New Year's Day, 1st Sunday after Christmas, Last Day of Kwanzaa	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Friday, Jan. 6, 1989	Epiphany, Festival of the Manifestation of Christ	Rainbow, Gold, or White
EPIPHANY SEASON	Sunday, Jan. 8, 1989	1st Sunday after the Epiphany,	Green
	Sunday, Jan. 15, 1989	2nd Sunday after the Epiphany M. L. King, Jr. Birthday Observance	Green
	Sunday, Jan. 22, 1989	3rd Sunday after the Epiphany	Green
	Sunday, Jan. 29, 1989	4th Sunday after the Epiphany	Green
	Sunday, Feb. 5, 1989	5th Sunday after the Epiphany, Beginning of World Church Extension Month, Beginning of Black History Month	Green

UFMCC CALENDAR OF THE CHURCH YEAR 1989 (page 2)

LENTEN SEASON	Wed., Feb. 8, 1989	Ash Wednesday, Beginning of Lent	Purple or Unbleached
	Sunday, Feb. 12, 1989	1st Sunday in Lent	Purple or Unbleached
	Sunday, Feb. 19, 1989	2nd Sunday in Lent	Purple or Unbleached
	Sunday, Feb. 26, 1989	3rd Sunday in Lent	Purple or Unbleached
	Sunday, March 5, 1989	4th Sunday in Lent	Purple or Unbleached
	Sunday, Mar. 12, 1989	5th Sunday in Lent	Purple or Unbleached
	Sunday, Mar. 19, 1989	Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday	Purple or Unbleached
	Thurs., Mar. 23, 1989	Maundy Thursday	Purple or Unbleached
	Friday, Mar. 24, 1989	Good Friday	Stripped bare with no color at all
EASTERTIDE	Sat., Mar. 25, 1989	Easter Eve Vigil	Purple to Gold, Rainbow, or White (at midnight)
	Sunday, Mar. 26, 1989	Easter Day, Festival of Resurrection	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Sunday, April 2, 1989	2nd Sun. of Easter	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Sunday, April 9, 1989	3rd Sun. of Easter	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Sunday, Apr. 16, 1989	4th Sun. of Easter	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Sunday, Apr. 23, 1989	5th Sun. of Easter	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Sunday, Apr. 30, 1989	6th Sun. of Easter, Beginning of Holocaust Week	Rainbow, Gold, or White
	Sunday, May 7, 1989	7th Sun. of Easter, Ascension Sunday, Beginning of Samaritan College Month	Rainbow, Gold, or White

PENTECOST SEASON	Sunday, May 14, 1989	Pentecost, Festival of the Holy Spirit	Red
	Sunday, May 21, 1989	1st Sunday after Pentecost Trinity Sunday	Red
	Sunday, May 28, 1989	2nd Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, June 4, 1989	3rd Sunday after Pentecost, Beginning of Gay/Lesbian Pride Month	Red
	Sunday, June 11, 1989	4th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, June 18, 1989	5th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, June 25, 1989	6th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, July 2, 1989	7th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, July 9, 1989	8th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, July 16, 1989	9th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, July 23, 1989	10th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, July 30, 1989	11th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Aug. 6, 1989	12th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Aug. 13, 1989	13th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Aug. 20, 1989	14th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Aug. 27, 1989	15th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Sept. 3, 1989	16th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Sept.10, 1989	17th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Sept.17, 1989	18th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Sept.24, 1989	19th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Oct. 1, 1989	20th Sunday after Pentecost, UFMCC Founders Sunday 1989, 21st Anniversary	Red
	Sunday, Oct. 8, 1989	21st Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Monday, Oct. 9, 1989	Thanksgiving Day (Canada)	Gold Rainbow, or White
	Sunday, Oct. 15, 1989	22nd Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Oct. 22, 1989	23rd Sunday after Pentecost	Red
	Sunday, Oct. 29, 1989	24th Sunday after Pentecost	Red

UFMCC CALENDAR OF THE CHURCH YEAR 1989

Sunday, Nov. 5, 1989	25th Sunday after Pentecost UFMCC Memorial Sunday/ All Saints Sunday	Red or White
Sunday, Nov. 12, 1989	26th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
Sunday, Nov. 19, 1989	27th Sunday after Pentecost	Red
Thurs., Nov. 23, 1989	Thanksgiving Day (U.S.A.)	Rainbow, Gold or White
Sunday, Nov. 26, 1989	Last Sunday after Pentecost	Red

C.C.C.C. news

CLERGY CREDENTIALS AND CONCERNS COMMITTEE (C.C.C.C.)

The C.C.C.C. is the committee that has been charged with credentialing our clergy and maintaining our clergy as they minister to our fellowship. As most of you are probably aware, this committee was restructured at the 1987 General Conference in Miami, Florida. This committee now consists of five people who are striving very hard to make a committee that works for you, listens to you, and responds to you. These people are: Rev. Jim Lewey, Chair, San Antonio, TX; Rev. Arlene Ackerman, Minneapolis, MN; Rev. David Farrell, San Diego, CA; Rev. Delores Berry, Baltimore, MD; and Rev. Dee Lamb, Houston, TX. The committee also employs an office administrator, Mr. Gene Van Horn.

Should you ever have any questions or concerns regarding your credentials, the credentialing process, or other matters of ministerial concern, please contact the C.C.C.C. Office at the Fellowship Headquarters, or Rev. Jim Lewey, (512) 736-3124.

ANNUAL FALL MEETING

The C.C.C.C. held its fall meeting here in Los Angeles, October 7 - 12. This meeting proved to be an extremely challenging but yet productive session.

We were faced with a number of issues each demanding immediate and careful attention. Among these were World-wide Credentialing, Educational Standards of Clergy, Transfer Clergy, Leave of Absence and Sabbatical, and the Appeals process. (See related articles.)

WORLD-WIDE CREDENTIALING

The C.C.C.C. is beginning to look at the issues of world-wide credentialing of competency for our clergy and the impact this has on our current credentialing process. It is has often been difficult to assess this as we have grappled with credentialing in the U.S.A., and yet we have the task of achieving some sort of equivalency worldwide.

One of our first tasks, is to establish an educational guideline for competencies. We will be studying this from a world-wide perspective, trying to determine what the basic needs of our clergy are for preparation to ministry.

Since we highly value feedback from the fellowship, a survey asking for ideas on educational competencies of clergy will be mailed within a few weeks to all of our fellowship clergy. This will be a major item of discussion at our next meeting in March, and therefore need your response to this survey returned within 30 days of receipt. More details will come with the survey.

CLERGY MANUAL REVISIONS

During this last meeting the various statuses of clergy as defined in the Clergy Manual were discussed. Specific attention was given to "Leave of Absence," "Sabbatical," and "De Facto Resignation". Our recommendations were given to General Council which approved them. These revisions will be mailed, when available, to those who have purchased the Clergy Manual within the last year. In the event you do not receive these materials, contact the C.C.C.C. Office with proof of purchase.

1989 LICENSING CYCLE

Whether you are seeking Initial Licensure, Relicensure, or Ordination, it is coming to that time of year when we must begin to prepare ourselves for the Licensing Cycle. Fortunately, the changes for the '89

cycle are already in place. However, there are a few items that need special attention.

All of the Initial Licensure, Relicensure, and Ordination applications and their related forms, particularly the EV-1's, have been revised. Please be sure that the applications you are submitting are the new forms. Look for the "rev 3 or 4/88" in the lower left hand corner. If you have recently purchased the Clergy Manual, it contains these new applications as well. If you do not have these applications, please contact the C.C.C.C. Office in Los Angeles as the old application forms will not be accepted this year.

One major change in procedure regarding the applications is in the evaluations and recommendations. All of these must be returned to the applicant. PLEASE INFORM YOUR EVALUATORS NOT TO FORWARD THESE TO THE C.C.C.C. OFFICE OR CHAIR. (They will be sent back to the applicant, possibly causing a failure to meet the deadline.) These must be included in the application package sent in by the applicant. This means that you, the applicant, must get these to your evaluators giving them sufficient time to act and respond back to you in time for you to meet the March 1st deadline!

Another change concerns the application itself. It must be bound, preferably in order. The ORIGINAL and three copies must be sent to the C.C.C.C. Office, postmarked by March 1st.

"What do you need for transcripts?" is a frequently asked question often compounded by the fact that we may already have some on file for you. Initial Licensure applicants must document their prerequisite credit hours as well as proficiency courses. Relicensure and Ordination applicants need only document courses taken since their last (re)licensure. The applications state an official transcript must be included. However, this is only necessary when we do not already have it. The official (if applicable) transcript must be included with the original application. All four copies of the application must include copies of the transcript(s). If you are using transcripts that are on file at the C.C.C.C./Certification Office a copy can be sent to you upon receipt of written request. Due to the "Freedom of Information" act phone requests can not be accepted. (Your entire file can be sent to you upon written request and a $10 fee.)

Initial Licensure applicants must also apply for and receive academic and experiential certification prior to application for licensure.

If you have any questions, please contact the C.C.C.C. Office.

CLERGY STATUS FORMS

The 1989 Clergy Status Forms will be mailed to all Fellowship clergy during the first week of November. Please remember that this is certifying your ministry for the 1988 calendar year for both credentialing and pensioning purposes. This must be returned to the C.C.C.C. Office in Los Angeles by January 1st. Failure to return this form will result in immediate "Inactive Status" for 1988 and following.

C.C.C.C. ADDRESSES

The C.C.C.C. can be contacted at:

Rev. Jim Lewey, Chair
c/o M.C.C. San Antonio
1136 W. Woodlawn Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78201-5791
(512) 736-3124

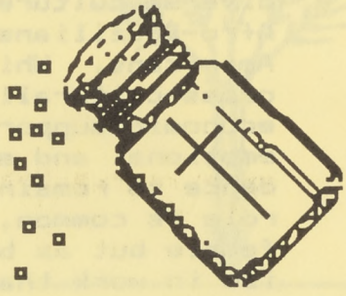
Mr. Gene L. Van Horn, Adm. Asst.
C.C.C.C./U.F.M.C.C.
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. #304
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 464-5100

Salt of the Earth Resources

"You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13).

You are the ones who can flavor the world with something different than it now knows.

Ministry resources for laity and clergy in the Metropolitan Community Churches.



Distributed by: Office of Ministry Resources, UFMCC
P. O. Box 14529
Hartford, CT 06114

Editor: The Rev. Jeffrey Pulling, M.Div., Ph.D.

NOVEMBER 1988 A CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF HOMOSEXUALITY

SALT OF THE EARTH RESOURCES (SOTER) is a monthly bulletin of resources for Christian ministry. A specific area of ministry is covered each issue. *SOTER* (so-táir) is Greek for Savior. To continue the ministry of our Savior, we must share with each other our resources.

The 1988 *SOTER* issues focus on the theme of ***DOING OUR MISSION.*** This issue explores the development of a cross-cultural understanding of homosexuality. As the UFMCC grows into a worldwide Fellowship of churches, we are increasingly becoming aware of the varied expressions that same-gender attraction takes in different cultures and countries. To be faithful and effective in our special outreach to gay/lesbian people, we must develop a cross - cultural understanding of homosexuality, and not assume that gay and lesbian people the world over have the same concerns and are dealing with the same issues, or that they act out their sexual orientation in the same ways.

PERIODICALS

The Advocate is a biweekly national (U.S.A.) gay magazine, published by Liberation Publications (6922 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90028). An annual subscription is $34.97 US. This magazine is primarily for gay men. Almost every issue contains an article about gay life in some country of the world. Some of the information given is "touristy" and some of it quite insightful.

Open Hands is a quarterly publication of Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian/Gay Concerns (P.O. Box 23636, Washington, DC 20026). An annual subscription is $12 US, and a single issue is $4. The Spring 1987 issue, "Minorities Within a Minority", contains several articles from gay and lesbian persons who also belong to an ethnic/racial minority. Many helpful insights are presented on what it means to be gay/lesbian *and* Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American.

BOOKS

Blackwood, Evelyn (editor), *The Many Faces of Homosexuality: Anthropological Approaches to Homosexual Behavior*, Harrington Park Press.
This anthology of current anthropological research highlights the varied expressions of homosexuality across cultures. Several

diverse cultures are viewed, such as New Guinea, urban Mexico, Afro-Brazilians, the Lesotho of South Africa, China, and Native Americans. While sexuality and gender constructs vary widely cross-culturally, some common themes emerge. For lesbianism, the economic support of woman-woman bonding is just as crucial as the emotional and sexual sides, because women need economic independence to remain unmarried. For male homosexuality, a "not-man" role is common, in that these men are seen as neither male nor female but as bridging or mediating the genders. They may specialize in work that women usually do and they often fill special religious roles.

Grahn, Judy, *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds,* Beacon Press (Boston, Massachusetts), 1984.

Grahn presents an illuminating look at gay and lesbian behavior and terminology across history and across cultures. An example of one of her "gems" is that the slang expression in India for female-female sexual behavior literally means "two saris together". Her book was the recipient of the American Library Association's "Gay Book Award" in 1985 and is the definitive gay/lesbian cultural history written to date. Grahn herself is a poet, teacher, and writer, and her book is a blend of history, etymology, poetry, legend, and autobiography. It is a creative synthesis of heretofore scattered fragments of information. She explains the origin of words such as "bad", "sin", "heretic", "faggot", "gay", and "bulldike", as well as the association of the day Thursday, the color purple, and the flower pansy with homosexuality. She explains the association of homsexuality with idolatry and paganism as stemming from the Church's suppression of indigenous, native religions, many of which were women-affirming and gay-affirming.

Whitam, Fredrick and Robin Mathy, *Male Homosexuality in Four Societies: Brazil, Guatemala, the Philippines, and the United States,* Praeger Press.

Whitam sets out to prove both the presence of male homosexuals in all societies at a definite identifiable rate (2-5%) and the presence of certain behavioral traits linked to homosexuality. His work has been faulted because, despite his claims, he "proves" neither theory biologically or statistically. The real value in this book lies elsewhere: in the vast amount of cross-cultural material on male homosexuality (and the organization and analysis of this material by colleague Robin Mathy). The material includes Whitam's own impressions of several gay urban areas, travelers' reports, anthropoologists' reports, a brief history of male homosexuality, and the results of questionnaires administered to urban gays in the four countries cited in the book's sub-title. One of Whitam's conclusions is that there are common cross-cultural occupational interests among gay males in grooming, embellishment/designing/decorating, entertainment and the arts, as well as a definite lack of interest in sports. Most of the self-identified homosexuals that Whitam describes and receives data from are "effeminate" (to use Whitam's own terminology). This may have more to do with who is willing to be "out" in various cultures than what male homosexuals in general are like. He does not take into account the common "masculine" image among American gay men or the participation of thousands in the Gay Games. In addition, because of the focus on male homosexuality, the book is irrelevant to understanding lesbianism.

Gleanings

A MONTHLY BULLETIN OF BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS
FOR UFMCC PREACHERS AND WORSHIP LEADERS
Distributed by the Office of Ministry Resources, UFMCC
Editor: The Rev. John Feagan

Vol. I no. 11 | Hebrews 4: 15 | November, 1988

EDITOR'S NOTE: This month we present a devotional meditation in the form of a reader's theater. It may be adapted for use in public worship or used for personal reflection.

Hebrews 4: 15

> *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are -- yet was without sin.*
>
> --New International Version

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, even from its beginnings, has taught that Jesus Christ was both fully human and fully divine. Time after time, the early church fathers issued creeds affirming and attempting to better explain this mystery of our faith. Yet in our modern world, many do not fully accept this central tenet of the Christian Faith. Some would accept the Christ as a divine apparition --only appearing to be in human form, or some dis-embodied 'ideal'. Others accept only a carpenter's son, Jesus of Nazareth, who rose to some prominence as a teacher of the Law before becoming embroiled in a Zealot's plot and executed by the authorities.

Even for those of us who claim to be people of the faith, it is oftentimes difficult to envision Jesus at our side. Just when we need it most, God seems so distant? Can Jesus really understand our pains, our sorrows, the challenges of modern living? After all, the world has changed considerably since Jesus walked the dusty roads of Palestine!

These fictionalized senarios are an attempt to present Jesus' possible replies to some modern dilemas, Listen:

READER 1: (a man) Jesus, I just lost my father. I know that most everyone faces the loss of their parents, but this was very difficult for me because my father and I never got along very well. He just couldn't seem to understand me. He had very definate, negative, opinions about my 'lifestyle', as he called it. I felt hurt and rejected when he pronounced that, "No son of his could turn-out, 'that way'!"

But now, he's gone; and we never got to talk. I couldn't explain how happy and fulfilling my life is now. I feel so guilty, as though I had caused his death. All my life, I only wanted his approval and now he's gone. Jesus, do you know my pain?

LEADER: Yes, my brother, I know your pain. The only father I had ever known died when I was just a young man. Joseph was a carpenter, the best in all of Galilee! People came from miles around to have him build things for them.

LEADER: He seemed to be able to 'read' the wood with his hands and to tell into what it 'wanted' to be made.

Papa never really understood me. Even from my birth he somehow felt leftout of my life. The years in Egypt must have been very hard for him; there wasn't much need for a Galilean carpenter in the court of Pharoah! He wanted me to follow in his footsteps, to keep-up the family carpentry shop, just as he had done. "Tradition," he said, "was Life!" It meant everything to him. He was a good man, a religious man; we went to synagogue faithfully, every Sabboth- yet he couldn't understand why I poured over the writings of the Prophets.

"What could they tell us? That was long ago, Rome rules, now!"

Papa, you died so suddenly. There was no time to talk. Papa, papa, I loved you so. You taught me to cherish life and to see the beauty, even in little things. Papa, how I longed to share with you my hopes and dreams.

All you ever wanted was for me to use the skills you taught me so well. Carpentry is a fine profession, Papa. I was proud to be called your son. I will make a coffin for you. It will be the very best; the corners will join tightly, just like you showed me.

Papa, ... Papa, did I do alright? Papa, can you understand my destiny lies elsewhere? Papa, do you love me?

Oh yes, my brother, I know your pain.

READER 2: (a young woman) Jesus, the doctor tells me I have AIDS. She gave me six-months to a year to live. There is no cure; there is no hope of finding one in time for me. Jesus, I'm only 25. I had my whole life ahead of me. Jesus, do you know my pain?

LEADER: Yes, my sister, I know your pain. That night, in the Garden of Gethsemane, I knew what lay before me. Over the last few weeks the picture of how I would fulfil my destiny had become more and more clear. I had tried to share with my friends, but they just couldn't see it coming. It was so easy to loose myself in their optimism.

Yet, that night, alone in the garden, there was no denying it; I was going to die -- soon! I thought of all the things I could have done, all the people I could have helped. I had seen Roman crucifixions before; I knew how painful it would be. I tried to put on a brave face; but inwardly, I was terrified.
Oh, yes, my sister, I know your pain.

READER 3: (a teenage boy) Jesus, I'm so confused. I don't know what to do. I don't want to hurt her fellings, but, but...

LEADER: That's okay, calm down...there now, why don't you just start at the beginning, and tell me all about her.

READER 3: (regaining his composure) Her name is Pamela; she's the most beautiful girl in the school. She was elected Homecoming Queen, twice! No one has ever done that before, at least not at my High school! Her smile lights-up the room, and her eyes, her eyes are so inviting... (lost in thought)

LEADER: Yes, well I can see that you're quite taken with her, so what's so confusing? You're young, go for it!

READER 3: The problem is that she thinks that all I'm interested in is her body. She keeps trying to seduce me! She's convinced that once we've had sex, I'll drop herlike all the other men have done. I love her. How can I convince her of it? She's so much fun to be with, and she is very attractive, but I don't want her in that way. I'm so confused. Is she right? Am I afraid to try, afraid to find out that I'm 'queer'?
Jesus, do you know my pain?

LEADER: Yes, my young brother, I do know your pain. One day, just after I had begun my ministry of teaching, I met a most beguiling woman, a prostitute from the town of Magdala. I too, saw more in her than she would allow. She was most appealing, but to lay with her would have been very wrong. I would have become just another person in a long line of people who only wanted to use her.

No, I loved her; I wanted more than that for her. It was difficult for me, too, to convince her that there was more to love than just sex. Tongues wagged behind my back, when I refused her company.

"There must be something 'strange' about him, " they said, "see how he dotes on his beloved, but leaves Mary's bed cold!"

Yes, my brother, I too didn't really know what to do with my sexuality. It always seemed to get in the way --such a distraction! --when I had so important a mission to accomplish!
Oh, yes, my brother, I know your pain.

READER 4: (a woman) Jesus, I have killed my mother, no, worse than murder, I have broken her heart! Momma, I failed you, I'm so sorry. Please, don't cry. She had so many hopes and dreams for me. Why couldn't I have done what she wanted? Was it so bad?
Jesus, do you know my pain?

LEADER: Yes, my sister, I know your pain. My mother told a story of how she first learned she was pregnant; of how the angel Gabriel had appeared to her, telling her that this child was of God, this child was the Messiah!

Everyday, as a child, she would read to me from the Scriptures, showing me how the Messiah would bring peace and justice to all the world.--how the Messiah would rule in God's name from the Temple in Jerusalem. Her faith in me became a drug. I would do anything to please her.

I became an exemplary young man to win her love. In the beginning, at that wedding in Cana, she seemed so pleased. But at the end, trudging along the street, beaten, dragging that heavy board, --the crowd mocking me at every step-- when I turned that corner, and saw her face, it was almost too much for me to bear!

John, my friend, take care of my mother; be the son I couldn't be.
Momma, the last thing in the world I wanted to do was to hurt you. I've failed you so. Would it have been so bad to let them make me King? Don't cry, Momma, it hurts to see you in such pain.
Yes, my sister, I know your pain.

READER 5: (an older man) Jesus, I'm so angry! I've been stabbed in the back by someone I thought was my friend! I guess I'd never really trusted anyone like that before, at least, no one at the office. I've always kept my personal life very private, not socialized much with people from work.

After 20 years with the company, most people didn't know much more about me than they did the day I started. I worked hard, and kept my nose clean. Then Brad was transferred to my section. He is quite an attractive young man, many people tried to become his friend. He seemed always to have an invitation for after work. I enjoyed working with him. He is so bright, so lively, so eager to learn from me. I liked the attention he paid me.

One day he mentioned the health club around the corner was offering a special on lunchtime workouts, and invited me to join him. It was exciting exercizing with him, showering with him. He seemed so open, so friendly towards me. Finally, I came out to him. He freaked-out! He accused me of making a pass. He told everyone at the office. He got me fired!
Jesus, do you know my pain?

LEADER: Yes, my brother, I know your pain. I, too, thought I knew my friend. I trusted him. He even kept all our money! Money! What did he ever lack? If he had wanted money there was more than 30 silver pieces in our purse. Why Judas? Did I not love you as much as any of the rest? Judas, must you betray me with a kiss? Oh, yes, my brother, I know your pain.

Yes, Jesus experienced all of these feelings and many more. Jesus grew hungry, thirsty, tired. Jesus felt proud of his work; happy in celebrating the Festivals. Jesus had allergies, and once or twice drank too much.

Yes, Christ was fully human, as we are. Yet Jesus, was also God, Emmanuel, God-with-us. In all of God's awesome power and holiness, God did not count it a loss to take on human form, human limitations, human frailties. Christ died for our redemption, paying the terrible penalty that each and every one of us owes.

But Christ lived for us also! Jesus lived a full life, and rose again to prove that we are accepted as God's children. The Risen Christ is the first among many, for we shall all taste death, but we shall be raised to new life in Christ!

Not merely some Heavenly existence, someday, when we die; but everyday, here and now! Christ lives in us, giving us hope and strength to live our lives in love and peace, as God originally intended.

Our fellowship with God is restored thru Christ our Saviour. When we are distraught, and can not even pray, God the Holy Spirit, prays for us. Even when we do not pray, God knows our needs, before we ask, and provides for us far better than even the flowers of the fields or the birds of the air!

Christ, your brother, knows your pain. Jesus understands the challenges that you face. Turn to Christ, open your heart. Receive God's only-begotten as your personal saviour. Jesus is waiting at your heart's door, to come in.

INQUIRES & CONTRIBUTIONS should be directed to:

GLEANINGS
Office of Ministry Resources, UFMCC
P. O. Box 14529
Hartford, CT 06114

PRESS RELEASE

General Council VII met in Hollywood, California, October 7-12, 1988 after coming together for the 20th Anniversary Dinner on October 6th. The Board of Elders and District Coordinators met separately on October 7 to deal with their separate responsibilities and issues. October 8 was spent in personal sharing and division meetings. October 9 was spent in further division meetings and joining MCC Los Angeles's 20th Anniversary Celebration.

During the plenary seesions that followed, some of the actions taken include:

* Appointment of Ms. Ellen Ratner, EDM and Dr. Tom Reveley to the Board of Trustees of Samaritan College.

* To make all plenary sessions of the General Council open to observers.

* Moved that on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the UFMCC, the General Council expresses its deepest gratitude to the Rev. Elder Dr. Troy D. Perry and affirms profound confidence in his continuing leadership as Moderator of the Fellowship.

* The Board of Elders has asked the By-Laws Committee to look at a Triennial General Conference.

* We agreed that hotel costs prohibit General Conference 1991 from meeting in Washington D.C. Further research on a site in the Mid-Atlantic, Northeast and Eastern Canadian Districts will be reported to the March General Council meeting.

* Established a forum at General Conference XIV to discuss alternate ways of funding travel to General Conference.

* Chartered Reconciliation MCC of Grand Rapids, MI, effective December 18, 1988.

* Set a requirement for annual congregational reports to UFMCC for legal and record keeping purposes.

* Adopted a first reading of a property policy for churches disaffiliating from UFMCC in the USA.

* Voted to allow non-USA Samaritan extension centers to establish a certification office and credentialling administrator and set appropriate fees for the credentialling process in their areas.

* Amended the 1989 UFMCC budget in view of reduced level of income expected.

* Noted with regret the absence of Ms. Mary Moore and Rev. Dr. Fred Williams due to illness.

* Set the next General Council meeting for March 1-7, 1989.

AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT PART OF WORLD AIDS DAY

The National AIDS Memorial Quilt will officially become INTERnational on World AIDS Day, December 1, 1988.

Local NAMES Project chapters in Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Norway, and West Germany will organize small displays of the Quilt, including panels made in their own countries. Chapters in the United States are also organizing displays, and several are holding community quilting bees or candlelight memorials. The NAMES Project Quilt will also be the backdrop to several other events throughout the day.

"In the United States, the Quilt has helped many people express the loss of their friends and loved ones, and it has helped many others learn about the impact of AIDS," said Jeannette Koijane, Director of International Programs for the NAMES Project. "But AIDS is a global tragedy and people from around the world have expressed interest in the Quilt's message. World AIDS Day will help them get involved with the Quilt."

On a local level World AIDS Day will help make AIDS information available, not only in the large cities, but also in smaller communities where accurate information can be harder to find.

World AIDS Day is sponsored by The World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS. It is a day for all AIDS organizations to talk about the disease and explain to their communities what is being done in education, research, and direct services for those with AIDS.

"SANTA UNION"

VIVA!, an organization dedicated to promoting Latina/o lesbian and gay culture and arts, is proud to announce the premiere of a new Hispanic Gay play, titled, "Santa Union" (Holy Union) by Roberto Ochoa-Schutz.

The play documents the struggles of an East Los Angeles Mexican-northamerican family dealing with their son/brothers spiritual, cultural, and sexual identity journey as a gay man, from 1972 to 1979.

"Santa Union" will be performed by the newly formed TEATRO VIVA! ENSEMBLE, which includes cast members: Conrad Corral, Betty Flores, Pablo Gallegos, Rita Gonzales, Mitchell Heidorn, Mikel Landa, Anthony Lopez, Mike Moreno, Teresa Valenciano, and Milagros Valdes. Writer Roberto Ochoa-Schutz is directing the production.

"Santa Union" opens with a sneak preview on Thursday, December 1, 1988 at the THEATRE OF LIGHT located in the First Methodist Church of Hollywood, and premieres Friday, Dec. 2nd at 8:00 pm. Tickets are $12.50 advance reservation and go on sale Oct. 12th. Performances are Friday and Saturday evenings and a Saturday Matinee at 2:00. The play will run through Dec. 17th. For more information or reservations please call (818) 962-3781.

"TAKING A CHANCE ON GOD"

A new book by Father John McNeill was published this month by Beacon Press, Boston, MA, titled "Taking A Chance on God: Liberating Theology for Gays, Lesbians, Their Lovers, Families and Friends" and contains his spiritual messages of love and hope showing that all contemporary gays and lesbians can find a place in today's Christian Church.

In his preface of the new book, Father McNeill explains that today's understanding of different sexualities places different demands on theology. As he puts it: "There is a special need today for a sexual theology. My first and foremost intention in this book is to provide a spirituality designed to meet the special needs of gay and lesbian Christians." The book also deals with a central health concern of the 1980s: "I also had in mind a more specific readership: all my gay brothers who have AIDS. These people have a desperate need to be able to understand what they are experiencing in the context of a new spirituality." For gays and lesbians, or anyone concerned with these issues, this book is a major statement of this important Christian's views.

Father John McNeill's first book, "The Church And The Homosexual", has just been re-released by Beacon Press in a newly updated Third Edition. With more than 50,000 copies in print, it is widely known for its message of spiritual fulfillment for gays and lesbians and for others who wish to share in the spirituality of the gay/lesbian community and their spiritual heritage. Father McNeill in the updating for this newest edition, has included in his classic book - new material on AIDS, gay and lesbian sexuality, and details of his own struggle within the Catholic Church.

If you are interested in purchasing one or both of Father McNeill's books please write to Beacon Press, Boston, MA. The cost of each book: "Taking A Chance On God" - Hardcover $17.95; "The Church And The Homosexual" - Paperback $9.95.

PEOPLE OF COLOR CONFERENCE

The People of Color Leadership Conference will take place in Cincinnati, Ohio on November 10-13 with the theme of "Lift Every Voice...". Keep them in your prayers as they continue their ministry of love and support to our family.

IN THIS ISSUE:

"UFMCC Liturgical Calendar of the Church Year for 1989". (For Churches Only)

Update from the Clergy Credentialing & Concerns Committee.

Salt of The Earth (SOTER) & Gleanings

GAY/LESBIAN "MARRIAGES" NO LONGER UNCOMMON

Gay and Lesbian union and marriage ceremonies may be more widespread than commonly assumed. Despite the failure of states to legally recognize homosexual marriage, many couples are honoring their relationship with wedding rituals. The popularity of these ceremonies is suggested by early returns from a national survey of same-sex couples undertaken by PARTNERS: The Newsletter for Gay & Lesbian Couples.

Of the first 136 surveys analyzed, 12 percent of respondents indicated that they had formalized their relationship with a ceremony, and 4 percent said they planned to do so. Another twelve percent relied on other traditional observances, such as celebrating anniversaries. Additionally, 43 percent of the respondents said they wear rings or other symbols of their relationship.

More than 700 completed surveys have been returned to PARTNERS thus far, and the survey remains open to participants through January. The short, anonymous questionnaire requests general information on subjects such as sexual agreements and satisfaction, sources of relationship support, and discrimination against same-sex couples.

According to co-publisher Demian, "The data we collect and interpret will help social service providers and civil rights advocates strengthen and support the families of lesbians and gay men."

PARTNERS is an eight-page monthly offering interviews, news and information to help gay and lesbian couples develop satisfying and successful relationships.

To participate in the survey, write to: PARTNERS, Box 9685, Seattle, WA 98109. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped business size envelope. PARTNERS will sent two forms per request (enough for one couple); affix extra postage for additional forms.